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OCI No. 3210/63

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
6 November 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Reaction to the Coup in South Vietnam

1. Recent Embassy reports and monitored press and radio broadcasts give some indication as to which countries are preparing to recognize the provisional government in South Vietnam.

2. In the Far East, Japan, Thailand, Nationalist China, the Philippines, Australia, Malaysia, Laos, and South Korea have either recognized the new government or have indicated that they are preparing to extend recognition. These countries have expressed the hope that the coup will benefit South Vietnam's prospects for stability and peace.

3. Cambodia is also ready to extend recognition, but at a price. Prince Sihanouk has attached several conditions to Cambodian recognition. These include, among other things, South Vietnam's cessation of border violations, dropping Diem's claim to disputed coastal islands, termination of support for anti-Sihanouk Cambodian exiles, and payment of a nine-year-old debt claim.

4. In West Europe, our ambassadors indicate that London, Bonn, and Rome will follow the US lead in recognizing the Vietnamese government.

a. The Embassy in London has been told that Britain wants to announce recognition simultaneously with the US and has instructed the British Embassy in Washington to coordinate timing with the State Department.

State Department review completed

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b. Ambassador McGhee reports from Bonn that West Germany favors recognition in principle and agrees that early recognition by the major powers would bolster the new Vietnamese regime. The ambassador believes, however, that the German Government will probably not extend recognition until after the US makes its move.

c. Ambassador Reinhardt says the Italians have taken the stand that Italy must follow the lead of other nations in extending recognition in order to avoid political discussions which could worsen the uneasy political situation there. An Italian spokesman told the ambassador that if the US, Germany, the UK, and France recognize South Vietnam, Italy will follow suit.

5. The picture in Paris is not so clearly drawn. A French Foreign Office spokesman told Ambassador Bohlen that the French Government is not likely to be in a hurry to recognize South Vietnam's new government. He told Ambassador Bohlen that the Quai is preparing a dossier on developments in Vietnam for a Council of Ministers meeting which presumably will be held today.

6. Canada also will not be hasty in recognizing the new government in South Vietnam. Foreign Minister Martin has told the House of Commons that the Canadian Government will give the matter of Vietnamese recognition its fullest consideration when the new regime is firmly established. He said Canada's decision will not be made lightly or quickly. (Canada's role on the International Control Commission is the inhibiting factor.)

7. Moscow and Peiping propaganda is in unusual accord concerning developments in South Vietnam. Both continue to agree that the coup has insured only a change of US puppets and that Diem was ousted at US behest--not because he was a dictator, but because he was an inefficient dictator. There is no doubt in the bloc concerning the political line of the South Vietnamese generals and their new government. There is unanimity of opinion that Diem's policies will be continued. According to bloc media, these policies are to subordinate Vietnam to US imperialism and to suppress the national liberation struggle of the Vietnamese people. There is also general agreement that the new government will be as militantly anti-Communist and as reactionary as its predecessor.

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